

Dubai Police call for help in fighting crime

The Pakistani taxi driver has been working in the UAE since 2003 and uses the money he earns to support his wife and three children in his home country.

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Dubai: Even though the crowd looking on shouted at him to let the man go, a courageous 32-year-old taxi driver held tight to an African thief who had stolen Dh300,000.

"I was surprised at the crowd's reaction. They just stared at me. No one offered to help. Instead they told me I shouldn't get involved. They told me criminals might have it in for me in the future for cooperating in capturing a suspect," said Bayazeed Shafaris Khan.

The Pakistani taxi driver has been working in the UAE since 2003 and uses the money he earns to support his wife and three children in his home country.

In early July, while he was resting in his room, a colleague informed him that three people had got hold of a man who had stolen money.

Brave intervention

"They were about to let him go, but I intervened and found myself the only one holding on to the suspect, who was fighting to free himself from my grip. I had to slap him a couple of times to control him," he explained.

"It's not part of my upbringing and culture to ignore such situations. As human beings we have to cooperate to stop wrongdoing," he said when asked what made him act.

According to the man, it took some time for the police to arrive. In the meantime, he struggled with the thief.

Colonel Mohammad Nasser, Deputy Director of the Criminal Investigations Department for Police Stations Affairs, said, "We greatly admire and respect the courageous attempt by Bayazeed, who assisted us in arresting a suspect and who, in return, led us to another suspect involved in the robbery."

In mid-June, Dubai Police launched an awareness campaign to increase cooperation between the public and the police in combating crime, said Lieutenant Colonel Salim Al

Rumaithi, Deputy Director of the Criminal Investigation General Department of Dubai Police.

Brigadier Khalil Ebrahim Al Mansouri, Director of the General Department for Criminal Investigations, said that only five per cent of criminal cases are resolved with assistance from the public and, in general, there's only a 20 to 30 per cent public participation rate, which is below par.

"It's time for this image to change. We've deployed strategies and a campaign to strengthen our cooperation with the public, and specifically with certain nationalities who might have a negative impression about the police force in their home countries and assume it's the same in Dubai. We practise the law and implement it fairly," he told Gulf News. The public can assist in many different types of criminal cases and are often valuable sources of information for crimes involving robbery, fraud, murder or rape.

They can be useful too when it comes to tracking down criminals, seeking stolen goods, and reporting homeless people, abandoned cars or apartments left suspiciously unoccupied.

Two-week campaign

After the intensified two-week campaign, public cooperation has significantly improved. A total of 96 people cooperated with Dubai Police on crime cases within just two weeks of it starting.

A number of different nationalities responded to the call for assistance. Asian nationals, in particular, were most helpful, said Colonel Nasser, adding that, in general, the response to the campaign was positive.

Of the people who cooperated, 13 were women and 83 men, all of whom were over the age of 16, said Captain Najim Abdullah, Head of the Crime Registration Unit at the Criminal Investigations Department of Dubai Police.

Most of the people who came forward to help came from residential communities or public market places, he added. A number of crimes were solved and the public assisted in arresting suspects and identifying trends that may lead to future crimes.

Confidentiality

Colonel Nasser stressed that police deal with any information from the public in absolute confidentiality.

However, "we do run a background check on the person who provides the information, to rule out their involvement in the crime. We focus on the crime itself and not on the person who cooperated with us. As a police force, we have to be objective and thorough in our investigations," he added.

The cooperation of the public helped the police to arrest two Asian suspects wanted for a number of robberies.

Whom to call: Useful numbers

- Tourist Security Department of Dubai Police: 800 4438
- Criminal Pursuit Department of Dubai Police: 04 288 1226
- Wanted Persons Department of Dubai Police: 04 266 0929
- Victim Support Programme of Dubai Police: 800 8989
- Al Ameen Service: 800 4888
- Operations room: 999

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